



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

JUN 07 2016

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:
E-19J

Marisol R. Simon
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
200 West Adams Street, Suite 320
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Mark Fuhrmann
Program Director, Rail New Starts
Metropolitan Council
390 Roberts Street North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1805

Re: Final Environmental Impact Statement – Southwest Green Line Light Rail
Transit (LRT) Extension (SWLRT), Hennepin County, Minnesota. CEQ # 20160100

Dear Ms. Simon and Mr. Fuhrmann:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) May 2016, Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Metropolitan Council's (Council) Southwest Green Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) Extension (SWLRT) Project. Our comments are provided pursuant the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The Southwest Light Rail Transit (LRT) (METRO Green Line Extension) Project is a proposed extension of the METRO Green Line (Central Corridor LRT), which would operate from downtown Minneapolis through the communities of St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie, passing in close proximity to Edina

The FEIS identified proposed Project includes both the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) (based on LRT 3A-1, co-location) and Locally Requested Capital Investments (LRCIs). The LPA is approximately 14.5 miles of new double track proposed as an extension of the METRO Green Line (Central Corridor LRT) that will allow for the co-location of freight rail and light rail in the Kenilworth Corridor (i.e., LRT 3A-1). The proposed alignment includes 16 new light rail stations (including the Eden Prairie Town Center Station that is deferred for construction at a later date), approximately 2,500 additional park-and-ride spaces, accommodations for passenger drop-off, and bicycle and pedestrian access, as well as new or restructured local bus route connection stations and one Operations & Maintenance Facility (OMF) located in the City of

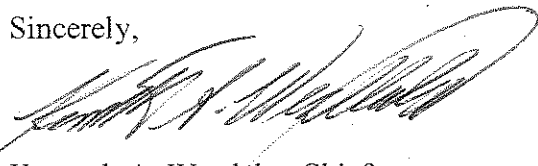
Hopkins, Minnesota. The LRCIs include proposed projects related to roadway, streetscape/landscape/aesthetic improvements, pedestrian/bicycle improvements, utilities, and guideway profile to be funded by local jurisdictions.

EPA commented on the 2012 Draft EIS (DEIS), the 2015 Supplemental DEIS, and the January 2016 Amended Section 4(f) Evaluation regarding the SWLRT Project in letters dated December 27, 2012, July 16, 2015 and January 28, 2016, respectively. We rated the DEIS and SDEIS as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2). Our comments and recommendations were to clarify the project purpose and need, and adequately analyze alternative impacts related to the OMF, aquatic resources, wetlands, water quality, wellhead protection, stormwater management, neighborhoods with environmental justice concerns, air quality, and noise. We also recommended undertaking an evaluation of a possible modification to DEIS Alternative LRT-3 to avoid impacts to a major wetland area.

Our review of the FEIS indicates that our earlier comments and recommendations have been satisfactorily addressed. Thank you. EPA has no further comments at this time. EPA requests one hard copy and 2 DVDs of the FTA Record of Decision, when it is available.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Virginia Laszewski of my staff at 312/886-7501 or at laszewski.virginia@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief
NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Cc (email):

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